Final Notes March 30, 1998

IMPLEMENTATION TEAM MEETING NOTES

March 5, 1998, 9:00 a.m.-4 p.m.

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE OFFICES
PORTLAND, OREGON

I. Greetings and Introductions.

The March 5 meeting of the Implementation Team, held at the National Marine Fisheries Service's offices in Portland, Oregon, was chaired by Brian Brown of NMFS. The agenda for the March 5 meeting and a list of attendees are attached as enclosures A and B. The following is a distillation (not a verbatim transcript) of items discussed at the meeting, together with actions taken on those items. Please note that some enclosures referenced in the body of the text may be too lengthy to attach; all enclosures referenced are available upon request from NMFS's Kathy Ceballos at 503/230-5420 or via email at kathy.ceballos@noaa.gov.

I. Introductions and Review of Agenda.

Brown welcomed everyone to the meeting, led a round of introductions and a review of the agenda.

II. Updates.

A. In-Season Management. The latest water supply forecast we have is still the February final forecast, said TMT chair Cindy Henriksen of COE. For Grand Coulee, the current January-July forecast is about 91% of average – 57.7 MAF. At The Dalles, the forecast is about 90% of average – 95.2 MAF. The forecast at Lower Granite, for the April-July period, 22.7 MAF, is 91% of average.

Since that forecast was issued in the first part of February, the River Forecast Center has come out with its mid-month and early-bird forecasts, Henriksen continued. In general, these later forecasts show a declining trend in runoff volume, compared to the February final – the forecast at Grand Coulee is now 88% of average; at The Dalles, the forecast is now 87% of average; the Lower Granite forecast continues to be about 90% of normal. We hope to have a final March forecast early next week, she added.

The Technical Management Team has also been working on the 1998 Water Management Plan, Henriksen continued; the most recent draft of this document is available on the TMT's Internet homepage. Our progress has been slowed somewhat by the fact that we are waiting to see the steelhead supplemental Biological Opinion, and what sort of flow regimes it may contain, she said. We are also waiting to see whether the supplemental BiOp will resolve some of the

issues we have been discussing, she added. Some of those issues include spill, including spill triggers, duration and volume, as well as whether spill should continue up to the gas cap or to the FPE target; interim draft limits, and whether the limits contained in the 1995 BiOp can be exceeded; and the relative priority of spring flow augmentation vs. summer flow augmentation. None of these issues is ripe for IT consideration at this time, Henriksen said.

Moving on, Ron McKown of the Bureau of Reclamation said his agency has begun repairs on the drum gates at Grand Coulee Dam, motivated by project safety concerns. We had originally hoped to finish those repairs by April 1, he said; however, last week the decision was made to extend that work period through April 5, in order to complete repairs on all eight drum gates in 1998. What this means is that Grand Coulee will be refilling throughout the month of April, in order to reach the project's flood control elevation by April 30.

I thought the original plan was to repair four gates in 1998, and do the other four next year, said Jim Nielsen of WDFW. It was, McKown replied; the decision was made to do all eight gates in 1998 in order to avoid a repeat of this situation next year. Our concern is that, by extending the work period, you also extend the refill period at Grand Coulee into the time when additional flows will be needed for migrating juveniles in the mid-Columbia, Nielsen said. At yesterday's TMT meeting, we asked that Reclamation explore the possibility of repairing four gates in 1998, under an accelerated schedule, and repairing the other four gates next year. It sounds as though the Bureau has decided that the impacts of a five-day extension of the work window into early April this year will be less than the impacts of spreading the work over two years, said Tony Nigro of ODFW. Is the Bureau also open to not extending those impacts later in the year by operating Grand Coulee at levels below elevation 1280, because the project will not meet its April 20 flood control elevation? Nigro asked. In a nutshell, yes, McKown replied.

We have discussed this issue extensively at the TMT, said Henriksen, and we think we need to do a little more technical analysis before we can grapple with the issue of interim draft limits at Grand Coulee. In response to a question, McKown said the decision to repair all eight drum gates in 1998 has been made; what has not been decided is, first, what are the impacts going to be, and second, how they should be mitigated for. Once the impacts are known, Reclamation will be willing to entertain proposals about how to mitigate for them, McKown said.

The TMT has also been discussing an SOR proposing a 1998 flood control shift from Brownlee Reservoir to Grand Coulee, said Ed Bowles of IDFG. Idaho Power has agreed to provide some feedback on this SOR prior to what hopefully will be a decision at next week's TMT meeting; the main thrust of the SOR is to shift some of the Brownlee flood control volume to Grand Coulee in 1998, so that it can be released to benefit fish during the spring migration season. Given the lower-than-average runoff forecast, and the fact that Grand Coulee, Dworshak and Hungry Horse are all well below their flood control elevations for this time of year, and will be refilling, rather than releasing water, in April, the salmon managers are quite concerned about Mid-Columbia flows during the early part of the 1998 migration -- hence this SOR, explained Nielsen. The Corps has indicated that it can probably live with the proposed Dworshak-Grand Coulee flood control shift, and I thought it might be a good idea to allow Idaho Power to discuss any concerns they may have at today's meeting, Bowles said.

Basically, we're headed for a flood control elevation of 2034 feet at Brownlee; the salmon

managers would like us to hold the elevation at that project at 2044 feet, said Steve Herndon of IPC. They would then like us to temporarily shift the release of that flood control volume into the last two weeks of April, he said. It's important to discuss this as soon as possible, because Brownlee reservoir will hit elevation 2044 by about March 10 if we continue with the current operation.

One concern Idaho Power has about the proposed operation is that it would most likely cause additional spill at the Hells Canyon complex, Herndon said; our position is that we will be happy to accommodate this request, if BPA is willing to enter into an energy exchange with us. Our operators tell me that, if BPA is willing to enter into such an agreement, it is possible for us to engage in this operation, and still meet our requirement to be at elevation 2069 ft. by June 7, Herndon said. However, as an investor-owned utility, we are not able to incur additional costs, which our ratepayers would have to pick up, in order to accommodate this request. There is also some concern about releasing more than 5 KAF of water from the state of Idaho without legislative approval, since it would not be part of a power operation, he added.

Since, under the current Brownlee operation, elevation at that project will fall below 2044 feet before next Wednesday's TMT meeting, said Bowles, I would like to come to at least a temporary resolution of this issue today, if possible. After some minutes of discussion, BPA's Dan Daley asked whether it is a certainty, at this point, that Idaho Power will incur a financial burden in accommodating the salmon managers' request; Herndon replied that, based on current inflow projections at Brownlee, accommodating this SOR will result in additional spill at the Hells Canyon complex. That is a forecast, rather than a certainty, but it's the best information we have available at this time, Herndon said.

If we assume that some sort of economic exchange will be necessary, Daley said, there are a couple of problems right off the bat. First, an energy exchange will require a contract, and right now, there is no such contract in place. However, it is possible that a contract could be negotiated quickly, which would take care of this problem. If you send me a one-paragraph letter, saying that BPA is willing to do an energy exchange, and that we will calculate after the fact whether or not such an exchange is even necessary, then Idaho Power will agree to this request, Herndon said. Okay -- that's good enough, said Daley.

The only other problem I see at this point, Daley continued, is that, if we do incur a cost in accommodating this request, that cost falls outside the MOA; it is also outside any of the measures called for in the 1995 Biological Opinion or the 1998 supplemental BiOp. Essentially, what I'm saying is that, if a cost is incurred, BPA has nowhere to put that cost.

Brown suggested that, if necessary, the TMT convene via conference call on Monday, March 9 in order to come to resolution on this issue prior to Brownlee reservoir reaching elevation 2044 feet on March 10. In the meantime, Daley said BPA will explore the possibility of a letter agreement with Idaho Power.

B. Plan for Analyzing and Testing Hypotheses (PATH). PATH’s recent activities were updated in Agenda Item VI.

C. Integrated Scientific Advisory Board (ISAB). The ISAB update was covered under Agenda Item III.

D. Dissolved Gas Team (DGT). Mark Schneider, co-chair of the Dissolved Gas Team, distributed Enclosure C, the gas abatement plan included in NMFS' request to the Washington Department of Ecology for approval to spill water at mainstem Lower Snake and Lower Columbia River hydroelectric projects. This document has now been submitted to WDOE as part of the approval process for the 1998 BiOp spill program, said Schneider; it is the product of considerable discussion at the DGT and SCT forums. The bottom line is, I don't anticipate any problems in the approval process from here on out, Schneider said.

On the subject of waivers in general, he continued, last week, the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality granted a waiver for the 1998 BiOp spill. At that time, ODEQ denied a waiver for spill above the 110% TDG standard in support of the Spring Creek hatchery release. The waiver requests to Idaho DEQ and the Nez Perce Tribe are now being prepared, and should be sent out by next week, Schneider said.

As most of you are aware, there is currently a freeze on spending for dissolved gas research, he continued; a final decision on whether or not to release funding for 1998 is expected by mid-March. There is some question about what effect a continued freeze on dissolved gas research spending might have on the waivers, he said; the conversations I have had with both Oregon and Washington indicate that a continued freeze is not likely to have a significant effect. From Oregon's standpoint, said Nigro, I would say that there is some risk to the waiver approval process if no research is conducted in 1998.

I don't believe it was the Council's intent to jeopardize the TDG waiver process in calling for this freeze on 1998 dissolved gas research spending, said Brown -- if that is the consequence of a continued freeze, I would suggest that Oregon make that clear to the Council before the decision is made. We will be talking to our Council members about that, so that they can fully brief the other Council members about what is at stake, Nigro replied.

Henriksen said the TMT has requested a meeting with the DGT; in reviewing the 1998 water management plan, we discovered that the spill plan it contains is actually last year's, and we would like the DGT to review that spill plan to be sure that it is still appropriate for use in 1998, she said. With the new flow deflector construction that has occurred since last year, there is also some additional analysis that needs to be done with respect to spill amounts, patterns and the effect on TDG levels downstream, she continued, so that that information can be incorporated into the 1998 plan. Schneider asked Henriksen to call him to arrange a DGT/TMT meeting.

Schneider added that the comprehensive dissolved gas research plan requested by the IT continues to be under development by the DGT.

E. System Configuration Team (SCT). Bill Hevlin, SCT co-chair, said that, at the last SCT meeting, a considerable amount of time was devoted to the subject of gas abatement in the upper Columbia River -- at Grand Coulee, Chief Joseph, Rocky Reach and Rock Island Dams. At that meeting, a need was identified for an annually-updated systemwide gas abatement plan, Hevlin said, both to assist in planning generation during high-spill periods to help us shift spill away from Grand Coulee and Chief Joseph, which create a lot of gas, and to assist in establishing gas abatement funding priorities -- based on what the Bureau has presented, the cost of gas abatement at Grand Coulee looks as though it will be in the $50 million to $100 million

range, he said.

What we are asking is that a team of regional managers be assigned the task of developing an annual gas abatement plan, Hevlin continued. This also applies to the temperature issue, observed Mary Lou Soscia of EPA -- it doesn't make much sense to continue to throw money at individual projects without looking at gas and temperature abatement measures in the context of the system as a whole. We need to have a better understanding of the system, so that the limited dollars that are available for these projects are spent in ways that provide the greatest benefit to the system as a whole. Since the IT is the only forum that is currently addressing systemwide issues, we felt this was the place to bring this request, she said.

We have received a lot of criticism in the region for spending so much on salmon recovery, said Jim Ruff of the Council staff -- if there is an opportunity to avoid large-scale structural fixes at some projects because it is more efficient to make them at other projects, then we need to know about that, and we need to get on with an evaluation that will tell us that. The Corps has its ongoing Dissolved Gas Abatement Study for the eight mainstem dams, but that doesn't include Grand Coulee, Chief Joseph or the Mid-Columbia dams. It would also make our task much easier if we could reduce the amount of gas coming into the system from Canada, Ruff observed.

Are you proposing a specific action? asked Doug Arndt of the Corps. Perhaps it would be satisfactory to say that the development of this annual gas abatement plan is something that should be done, probably by an ad hoc group that includes the appropriate personnel from both the SCT and the DGT, Brown said. The next question is, what is the appropriate schedule for this effort?

I think there may be a little more to it than that, said Ruff -- the Corps has the ability to model predicted dissolved gas levels at the mainstem projects under different structural alternatives, but we do not have that capability for Grand Coulee, Chief Joseph or the Mid- Columbia dams. One of the things we need to know is, who is going to develop that capability, and where is the funding going to come from? The most efficient way to approach this might be to ask the SCT to scope out what needs to be done to develop this plan, and to make a recommendation about who should take the lead in this systemwide gas abatement effort, Arndt suggested. After some minutes of discussion, no disagreement was raised to Arndt's suggestion; Brown asked that the SCT develop this scoping document for presentation at the May IT meeting.

It was further agreed that temperature is probably a separate issue from gas; Ruff observed that an SCT temperature subgroup is now in place, and that this subgroup is addressing the modeling aspects of temperature in the mainstem Snake and Columbia Rivers. I would think that that would be the appropriate group to look at the development of a systemwide water temperature plan, he said. As long as there is a close connection between the dissolved gas and temperature planning efforts, said Soscia. It was agreed that the water temperature team will also provide a report on the expected scope of an annual temperature abatement planning effort at the May IT meeting.

F. Decision Process Coordinating Group (DPCG). No report was presented on this topic at today’s meeting.

III. Report from ISAB on Transportation Question.

As most of you are aware, said Mike Schiewe of NMFS, the much-anticipated report on transportation from the Independent Scientific Advisory Board was delivered to NMFS earlier this week, and is now available from the Power Planning Council's Internet homepage (a copy of the ISAB's report is attached as Enclosure D).

The main issues raised by the ISAB report, for me, include, first, a concern about the ability of transportation to preserve or maintain biological diversity, Schiewe said. The report acknowledges that, in the case of the species for which it is specifically tested -- spring/summer chinook and steelhead -- the transportation numbers tend to be positive. However, the ISAB expresses the concern that the numbers were not collected in a way that addresses the question on a stock-by-stock, tributary-by-tributary basis. The concern is that any single mitigation measure that disproportionately benefits one species, stock or life-history type could potentially impact another, said Schiewe.

One specific recommendation in the report has to do with trucking, he continued -- they feel that trucking is more detrimental to fish than barging. The report is fairly uncertain about the issue of straying; the conclusion was that straying problems are probably more severe for fish that have been trucked than for fish that have been barged. Finally, the ISAB concludes that neither transportation, nor, for that matter, any other single form of mitigation, is consistent with their normative conceptual foundation, Schiewe said.

If the IT has any specific questions about this report, I would suggest that you arrange a briefing from the ISAB, Schiewe said -- it is their report. Do you know whether the ISAB is planning to make a presentation at the Executive Committee meeting later this month? Brown asked. I can certainly set that up, if you feel it would be useful, Schiewe replied. I think it would, said Brown, and I think it would also be a good idea to have some review and discussion of the ISAB report within this group prior to the Executive Committee meeting.

What effect will this report have on the transportation decisions in 1998? asked Ed Bowles of IDFG. It will not delay the planned April 1 finalization date for the supplemental Biological Opinion, Brown replied. NMFS delivered a draft BiOp to the federal action agencies last Monday; we are currently involved in discussions with those agencies to determine what the draft that goes out for broader review will look like, he said. Logistically, it is not going to be possible to release that draft for regional review on March 9 as planned; at this point, there is a conference call, involving the regional federal executives, scheduled for tomorrow, said Brown. We hope to resolve any outstanding issues during that call, and to have a draft ready for regional distribution by next week. However, there are still some difficult issues to be resolved, including what the 1998 transportation operation will look like.

So the 1998 transport operations will largely be decided and contained within the supplemental BiOp? asked Jim Hoff of WDFW. That's correct, Brown replied. The group spent a few minutes discussing the upcoming EC agenda; Nigro observed that he expects that agenda to include an opportunity for the salmon managers and other interested parties to engage in a real-time discussion about issues contained in the supplemental BiOp, as well as the specifics of the 1998 transport operation, with the Executive Committee. Frankly, I'm not sure a lengthy presentation from Rick Williams on the ISAB report would be the best use of the executives'

time, Nigro said.

After some minutes of discussion, Brown summarized this discussion by saying that there appears to be a need for further IT discussion of the 1998 transport operation prior to the Executive Committee meeting on March 26. With that in mind, he suggested that a supplemental IT meeting be scheduled for March 19; it was so agreed. We can get a presentation from the
ISAB at that time, he said; by then, the draft supplemental Biological Opinion will be available, and we can discuss the specific actions it contains. I would further suggest, said Brown, that it would be a mistake not to include some discussion of the ISAB report on the Executive Committee agenda.

Just to finish the discussion of the status of the steelhead consultations, said Brown, NMFS has been working separately with the lower river tribes, and have a technical consultation scheduled with the tribes on March 20 and a policy discussion with the tribes scheduled for March 27. When do you anticipate that a draft supplemental BiOp will be available for review
by the states? Bowles asked. My target is no later than the end of next week, Brown replied.

IV. Funding Issue Regarding Navigation Improvements at Ice Harbor.

At the last SCT meeting, said Hevlin, the Corps proposed what amounts to Phase III of gas abatement work at Ice Harbor dam, which will include a navigation lock training wall extension, the installation of flow deflectors on the end bays at the project, and the construction of three coffer cells downstream of the navigation lock training wall. The training wall extension is intended to improve adult passage conditions; the additional deflectors are for further gas abatement. The coffer cells are intended to correct adverse navigation conditions caused by the installation of the flip-lips at Ice Harbor, Hevlin explained.

There was one issue related to this work that we were unable to resolve at the meeting, he continued -- the Corps would like to use CRFM program funds to pay for this work, including the navigation fix. It's important that we resolve this issue in a timely manner, because the Corps would like to let a contract for these three items on April 1 in order to complete work on the navigation fix by December 1998, Hevlin said. In response to a question, Hevlin explained that the new flow deflectors are causing cross-currents below the navigation lock, forcing passing barge traffic into the shore. The high flow and spill levels in 1997 only exacerbated the navigation problem, added Ruff.

The majority of the SCT feels that it is not appropriate to use fish mitigation funds to pay for the navigation correction, Hevlin said. He distributed Enclosure E, an SCT memo detailing this issue, and the opposing viewpoints surrounding it. Hevlin added that there is no controversy surrounding the use of CRFM finds to pay for the end-bay deflectors or the training wall extension , although there were some differences of opinion within the SCT about whether or not that work should go forward in FY'98. The issue we're bringing before you today is only whether or not fish mitigation funds should also be used to pay for the coffer cell construction, he said.

Arndt explained that the Corps' position is that, from a safety standpoint, the coffer cell

construction has to be completed as soon as possible; further, that because the navigation problems at Ice Harbor were exacerbated by a fish mitigation project -- the installation of flow deflectors at the dam -- it is appropriate that fish mitigation funds be used to correct it. If CRFM funds are used for the coffer cell construction, does that mean something else in the CRFM program will fall off the table? asked Fred Olney. The $3 million for the coffer cells would come out of the FY'99 budget, Hevlin replied, and the SCT has not yet arrived at its FY'99 funding priorities. However, that is $3 million that might otherwise be used to fund other CRFM program items in FY'99, Ruff observed. It could also be argued that the coffer cells are simply another component of the overall cost of flow deflector installation at Ice Harbor, which has consistently ranked as one of the highest priorities within the CRFM budget, said Arndt.

Is there an alternative funding mechanism that might be used for the coffer cells? Nigro asked. If so, it seems prudent to use that source, to relieve some of the pressure on an already- strained CRFM budget. You can always look for an alternative funding source, Arndt replied, but the question is, is there an appropriate alternative funding source? The Corps is constrained by a very specific set of funding guidelines -- for example, we don't fund O&M items with Construction General dollars. If the Corps constructs a dam, which has adverse impacts on the fishery, then power revenues are used to mitigate for those adverse effects. In this case, a fish mitigation project has caused an adverse effect on another river user, and in the Corps' view, it is appropriate to use fish mitigation funding to correct the problem.

The IT devoted some minutes to a discussion of the nuances of the fish mitigation funding process, and the relative responsibilities of the Corps, ratepayers and the navigation industry in this instance. Hevlin raised the point that, in the context of the 1999 decision, which, if drawdown of the Lower Snake projects is the option chosen, would render the coffer cells obsolete, it may make sense to defer this project until after that decision is made. Would it be possible to take a wait and see approach to this issue, and mitigate for the problem through operational changes at Ice Harbor in the interim? The fact that four additional deflectors are now on-line at Ice Harbor is expected to exacerbate an already life-threatening navigation problem, Arndt replied -- the Corps doesn't want to wait to correct this problem. Of course, it may be that, under the lower-flow conditions that are forecast for 1998, the problem may be much less severe -- if that's the case, then we still have the option of backing away from the contract for this work, he said. However, even if the contract goes forward as scheduled, the coffer cells won't be in place until 1999, and no one knows what conditions are going to be like next year.

After some minutes of further discussion, it was observed that the contract for this work will not actually be awarded until May 15. This being the case, it was agreed that there will be an opportunity for further discussion of this issue prior to contract award, at the April and May IT and SCT meetings. For now, it sounds as though the Corps intends to move forward with the contracting process for its planned Phase III gas abatement work at Ice Harbor, Hevlin said; the SCT will provide an update on its discussion of this issue at the May IT meeting. No IT objections were raised to this course of action.

V. Status of Steelhead Consultations.

This topic was discussed during Agenda Item III.

VI. Confirmation of PATH Priorities, Discussion of PATH Presentation to Executive Committee.

Brown distributed Enclosure H, a memo summarizing the tentative recommendations regarding the schedule and priorities for PATH analysis made at the February 19 IT meeting (please see this document for details). The PATH steering committee has now met and discussed this list of recommendations, Brown said, and would like to discuss it today.

PATH coordinator Dave Marmorek said the PATH steering committee has accepted the IT's recommendations with respect to schedule. The one concern that came out is that, if PATH, as planned, releases its preliminary spring/summer chinook report within the next week or so, it is important that it be recognized as just that – a preliminary report, Marmorek said. Results may change quite a bit once the final report comes out. Our concern is mainly how to release this preliminary report in a way that doesn't lead to awkwardness further down the road as results change.

In response to a question, Marmorek said that, under the schedule recommended by the IT at its last meeting, PATH will immediately shift its focus to fall chinook, then come back to the spring/summer chinook analysis in July. PATH's final spring/summer chinook report will be completed in October 1998; a preliminary fall chinook report will be available in July, with the final fall chinook report due out in October 1998.

PATH's basic response is that we endorse the recommendations made at the last IT meeting, and in fact have already had one meeting on fall chinook, Marmorek said. It's going to be a tight schedule, but we think we can manage it. One question that did come up regarding fall chinook, he continued, was the relative priorities of the Snake River fall chinook and Hanford Reach fall chinook analyses. Our assumption is that our primary focus is on the Snake River fall chinook, since they're the ones that are listed, said Marmorek. Once we've dealt with that, we can then move on to look at the Hanford fall chinook; however, there will not be time to do a complete analysis of both stocks by the end of July. After some minutes of discussion, no IT objections were raised to Marmorek's characterization of the relative priorities of these analyses.

Marmorek and Arndt discussed the practical usefulness of the information contained in PATH's preliminary spring/summer chinook analysis; Arndt made the point that if there are too many uncertainties associated with this data, its usefulness to decisionmakers is limited at best. Let me clearly reiterate, once again, that our final analyses will not be able to eliminate all of the uncertainties, Marmorek said. We cannot create missing historical data, nor can we perfectly predict future conditions – there will still be a considerable amount of uncertainty associated even with PATH's final analyses. Hopefully the uncertainties inherent in the final reports will be smaller than those associated with PATH's preliminary results, as we assign weights to the alternative processes, he said. However, when the time comes to make the 1999 decision, those uncertainties will still be considerable.

Arndt suggested that it may be useful to ask the ISAB to review some of the major areas of uncertainty inherent in the PATH analysis, and to render their assessment of how those uncertainties may color PATH's final conclusions. PATH's current plan is to lay out all of the evidence around some of the key uncertainties, then look at the appropriate weight that could be

assigned to those alternatives, in an effort to come to some consensus where we can, Marmorek replied. Where we can't, we will seek some external review, from either the ISAB or the Scientific Review Panel, on the weights or range of weights it is appropriate to use.

One other question for IT consideration has to do with alternative management actions, Marmorek continued – we've done A1, A2 and A3; we still need to look at B1 (Snake River and John Day drawdown), as well as B2' (maximize transportation with surface collectors). PATH's question is, how important does the IT feel it is for us to analyze alternative A5 (natural river drawdown of the Snake River projects without flow augmentation in the Snake) or A6 (the "in-river" option -- flow augmentation and surface bypass collection; no transportation)? There is some desire within PATH to limit the number of alternatives analyzed, in order to free up more time to concentrate on the weight of evidence approach, Marmorek explained.

The idea of narrowing our range of options this early in the analytical process makes me extremely uncomfortable, said Daley -- I thought the purpose of the analytical process was to narrow the range of options. Personally, he said, I would be interested in knowing what PATH's schedule would look like if you were to do a full analysis of spring/summer and fall chinook, covering all of the alternatives, then do whatever it's possible for you to do on steelhead. We can talk about that within PATH, Marmorek said – I can't give you an answer off the top of my head.

Is the assumption that PATH will be able to wrap up its fall chinook work by June a reasonable one, given how long it has taken to get where we are on spring chinook? Arndt asked. That's a fair question, Marmorek replied – we're basically looking at what we can do within the time available, rather than how much time we would need to develop something that would be more complete.

Various IT participants indicated a desire to have PATH look at the effects of increases and decreases in flow on PATH's results, and on the probability of a given alternative's meeting the survival standard. Marmorek said he would check with the other members of the planning group about PATH's ability to complete that analysis within the available time-frame; there was general agreement that a sensitivity analysis looking at various flow levels would be a much simpler task than analyzing additional alternatives.

In response to Marmorek's original question, Brown, too, expressed concern about dropping any of the alternatives from the PATH analysis; it was agreed to leave all of the currently-proposed alternatives, including A2', B1, A5 and A6 on the table for now, and to ask PATH to do the best it can to analyze them all within the time available.

Tom Cooney of NMFS gave the IT a heads-up about an anticipated need, discussed in some detail at yesterday's Decision Process Coordinating Group meeting, for more detailed information than what PATH will be producing on future potential hatchery production and harvest schedules. The various groups doing the economic analysis in support of the 1999 decision will need this information in order to move forward, Cooney explained; it may involve forming another workgroup, or possibly hiring a consultant to do at least some of the basic work. We have a little time to deal with this issue, he said, but some time in the next few weeks, we will need to discuss how to resolve it, in order to avoid a fairly serious analytical bottleneck on the economic side. There should probably be some discussion with the folks involved in U.S. v.

Oregon to develop a strategy to help the economists deal with this issue, Cooney said. It was agreed that Cooney and Howard Schaller of ODFW will approach those involved in U.S. v. Oregon and report back at the March 19 IT meeting.

VII. Discussion of Executive Committee Agenda.

Brown distributed copies of Enclosure F, the proposed agenda for the March 26 EC meeting in Portland. After some minutes of discussion, it was agreed to remove Item VII – "Non-Treaty Storage – Past and Possible Future Operations –" from the March 26 agenda. It was also agreed to add a presentation on, and discussion of, the draft supplemental Biological Opinion and the ISAB transportation report, under Agenda Item IV B, "1998 Transportation Operations." It was further agreed to add a discussion of 1998 Water Management Plan issues (flow, transport and spill) as Agenda Item IV C.

VIII. Facilitation Update.

Alan Ruger is now in the process of taking the large list of facilitation candidates that each of the states supplied and weeding out the people who simply won't be able to fit the bill, Daley said – for example, facilitators who are based in Washington, D.C., and people who really aren't qualified to provide this service. It's a process of contacting the people on the list directly, explaining exactly what we're looking for and asking whether or not they're still interested, Daley explained. According to Ruger, the list of candidates is dwindling; however, he doesn't yet have a "short list" of potentially-acceptable candidates, or even an estimate of the final number of candidates to be interviewed.

In terms of timing, while it may not be possible to have a facilitator on board by the beginning of the in-season management period, we're hoping that it won't be too long after that, Daley said. In terms of the remaining work that needs to be done to make that happen, BPA still needs to collect the responses to its solicitation; the review team will then review those responses, develop a list of candidates to be interviewed, then interview them. I would imagine that there will then need to be some further discussion of the review panel's choice in this forum, Daley said.

Actually, in talking with Alan this morning, it sounds as though the review team's recommendation will be submitted directly to BPA, bypassing the IT, and that is a concern to me, said IT coordinator John Palensky. He added that the review panel currently consists of himself, Jim Nielsen, Ron Boyce, Alan Ruger, Doug Arndt and, tentatively, Si Whitman.

Is the IT comfortable with that review team making what amounts to the final selection of a facilitation contractor? Palensky asked. After some minutes of discussion, Daley said it is his understanding that there is nothing that would preclude the review team from holding some discussion with the IT prior to making its recommendation. According to my notes, added Nigro, at a previous IT meeting, it was agreed that the primary IT role in the selection process was going to be a review of the selection criteria used to assess each applicant – after that, the actual decision was to be delegated to the review team. After some minutes of further discussion, Palensky said he would obtain a copy of the review team criteria from BPA and

distribute it to the IT membership for review. We can then take comments on those criteria at the March 19 IT meeting, he suggested.

IX. Next IT Meeting Date and Agenda Items.

The next meeting of the Implementation Team was set for Thursday, March 19, beginning at 9 a.m., location t.b.a. Meeting notes prepared by Jeff Kuechle, BPA contractor.